



North East Florida Educational Consortium

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COMMENTS: FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Washington D.C. 20554

WC Docket No. 13-184

Matters of Maximizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries

The 15 rural school districts of the North East Florida Educational Consortium would like to request that rules would be adopted that would allow and encourage all schools in the State of Florida to maximize cost-effective purchasing in the E-rate program. We are proposing that the concept of using a hybrid-owned network developed by a consortium of schools would work very well for our small and rural schools.

Recent legislation within the Health Care Connect program reviewed numerous pilots nation-wide and determined that allowing the entity (the health care provider consortium) to design, build and operate its own network was a viable solution to drive down broadband access pricing in rural areas. We are proposing the same opportunity be available for our regional education consortia, on behalf of our small and rural school districts.

In Florida, the three (3) educational consortia have extensive experience in the successful development of services and products for small, rural districts that otherwise would have been unattainable by the districts. The consortia are North East Florida Educational Consortium, Panhandle Area Educational Consortium and Heartland Educational Consortium.

Therefore, we propose that the FCC adopt the same rules as it did in the Health Care Connect program, with no requirement for a pilot program, to allow educational consortia to build and manage their own networks where other providers' pricing is not competitive for the needs of the rural schools and libraries within the consortia. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director

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